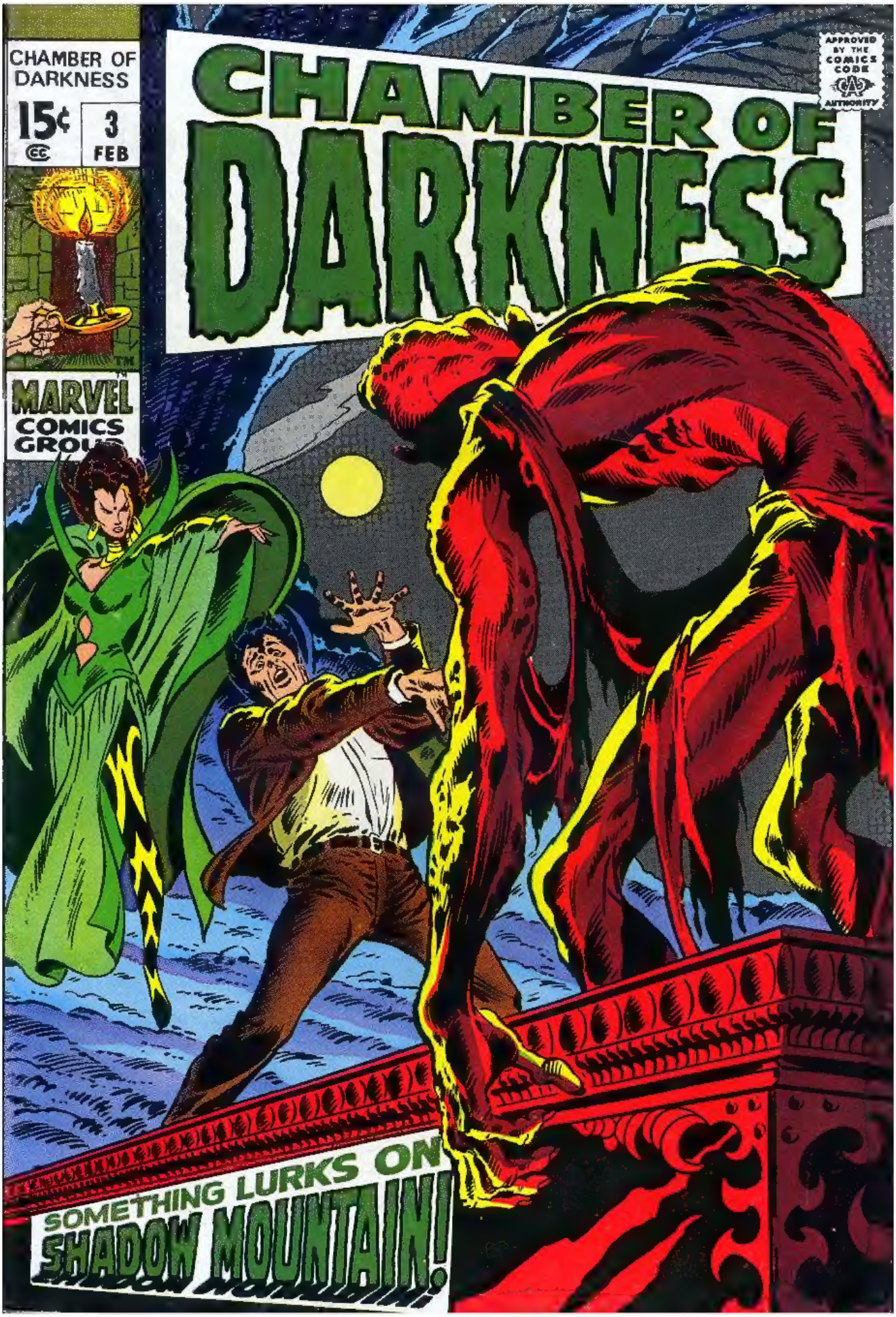
CHAMBER OF DARKNESS
15¢
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FEB
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
CHAMBER OF DARKNESS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
SOMETHING LURKS ON SHADOW MOUNTAIN!

"WIND WHISTLED IN FROM THE MOOR, THAT NIGHT SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS AGO ---A COLD, CHILLING WIND THAT PORTENDED THE EVIL WHICH HUNG IN THE AIR LIKE BILLOWING STORM CLOUDS--!!
"...A WICKEDNESS PERSONIFIED IN THE ANCIENT FORM OF MOORG THE WARLOCK..."
STAND YE BACK!
I'LL NOT HAVE THY VILE PRESENCE THWART MY PLANS ANEW!
'TIS ALREADY TOO LATE FOR PLANNING, WIZARD!
AYE! NOW, YE HAVE TIME ONLY TO DIE!
STAN LEE EDITOR
GERARD CONWAY WRITER
BARRY SMITH ARTIST
SYD SHORES INKER
SAM ROSEN LETTERER
THE WARLOCK TREE!

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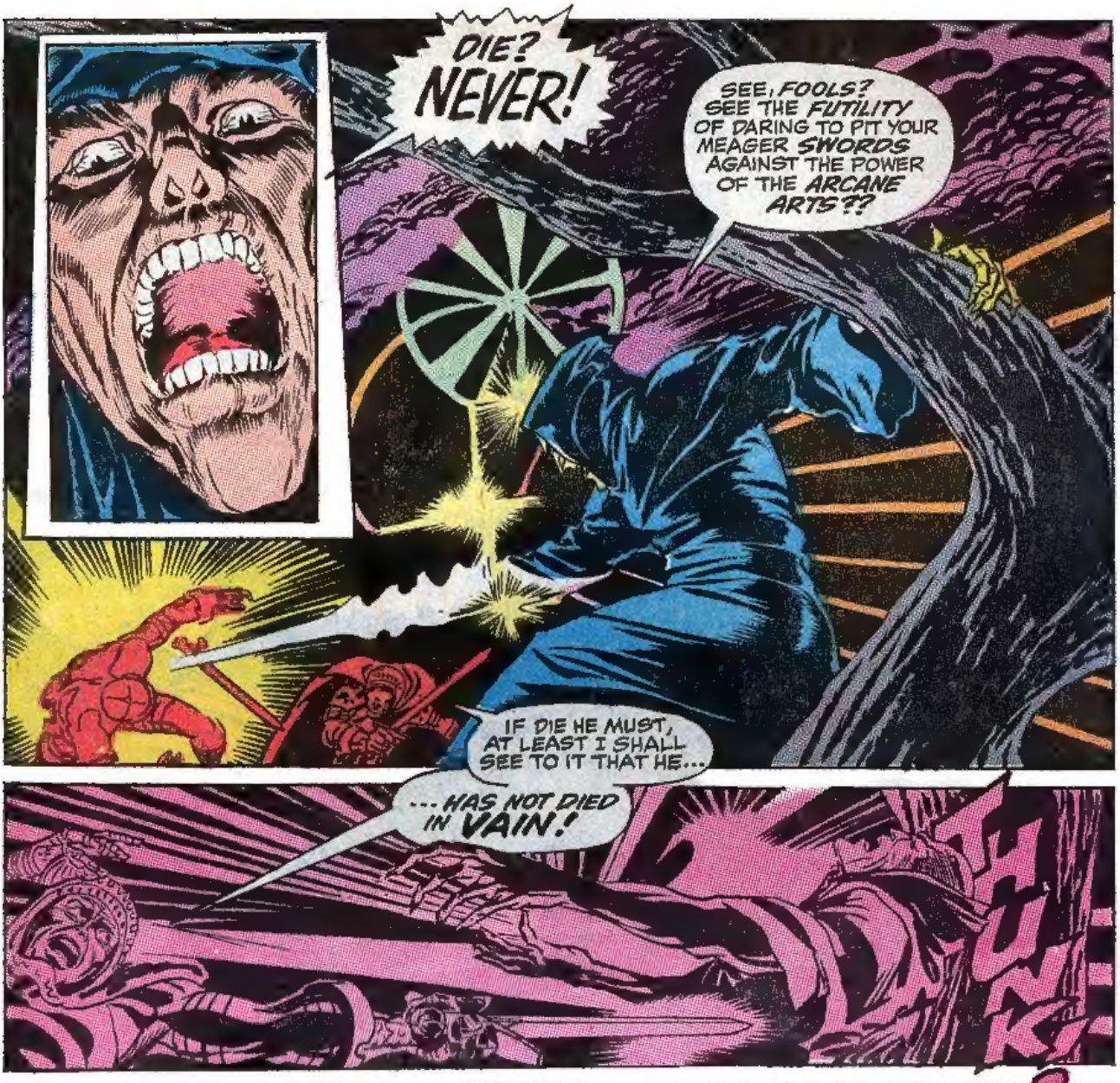
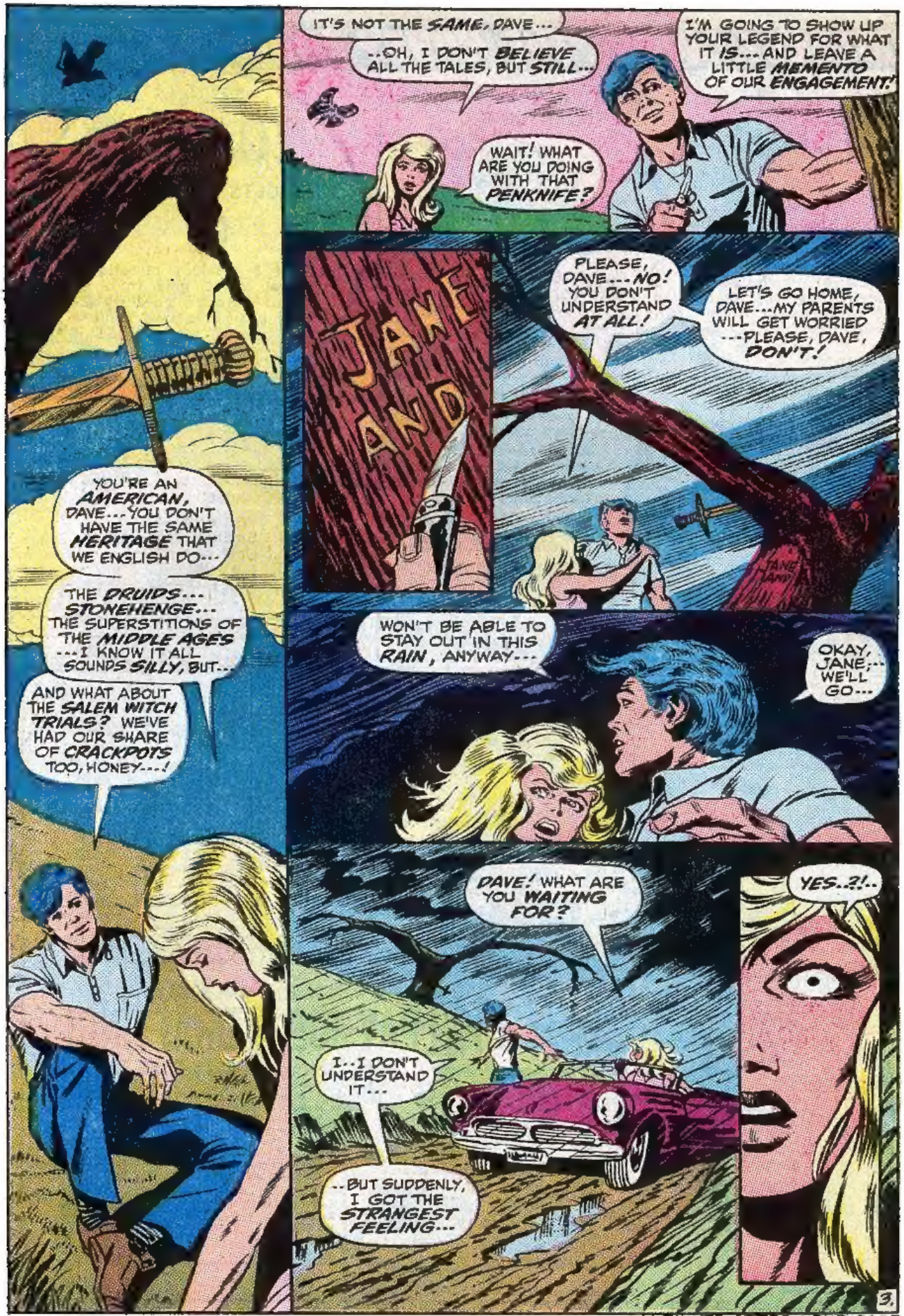

DIE? NEVER!
SEE, FOOLS? SEE THE FUTILITY OF DARING TO PIT YOUR MEAGER SWORDS AGAINST THE POWER OF THE ARCANE ARTS??
IF DIE HE MUST, AT LEAST I SHALL SEE TO IT THAT HE...
...HAS NOT DIED IN VAIN!
THUNK!

"LIFE DRAINED FROM THE BODY OF MOORG THE WARLOCK, BUT HIS SPIRIT STILL BURNED WITH HATE, AND HIS LAST WORDS SENT A CHILL THROUGH TO THE MARROW OF THE KNIGHT WHO HAD BROUGHT HIM DEATH..."
I CURSE YOU, SIR GILIARD... I CURSE YOU AND YOUR PROGENY WITH FATE WORSE THAN THE ETERNAL FIRES...

...AND I CURSE THIS INFAMOUS TREE....AND ANY WHOSE VERY NAME MAY BE LINKED IN ANY WAY WITH IT.../
CURSE YOU ALL TO THE ENDS OF...
:AAAARRRGGHH!:

JANE BRINGS HER NARRATIVE TO A CLOSE, AND YET... WHY DO YOU FEEL VAGUELY UNCOMFORTABLE, DAVE? IT'S ONLY A STORY...!
...DIED ON THIS VERY SPOT! THE SWORD REMAINED IN THE TREE, AS A TALISMAN TO BIND HIS VENGEFUL SPIRIT TO THIS ANCIENT OAK...!
NOT VERY LONG AFTER, SIR GILIARD'S ENTIRE FAMILY PERISHED IN A FLOOD ...DROWNED LIKE RATS!
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING, JANE! YOU DON'T REALLY BELIEVE THAT NONSENSE, DO YOU?
2.


YOU'RE AN AMERICAN, DAVE... YOU DON'T HAVE THE SAME HERITAGE THAT WE ENGLISH DO...
THE DRUIDS... STONEHENGE... THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE MIDDLE AGES ...I KNOW IT ALL SOUNDS SILLY, BUT...
AND WHAT ABOUT THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS? WE'VE HAD OUR SHARE OF CRACKPOTS TOO, HONEY...!
IT'S NOT THE SAME, DAVE...
..OH, I DON'T BELIEVE ALL THE TALES, BUT STILL...
WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THAT PENKNIFE?
I'M GOING TO SHOW UP YOUR LEGEND FOR WHAT IT IS... AND LEAVE A LITTLE MEMENTO OF OUR ENGAGEMENT!
JANE
PLEASE, DAVE... NO! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND AT ALL!
LET'S GO HOME, DAVE... MY PARENTS WILL GET WORRIED ...PLEASE, DAVE, DON'T!
WON'T BE ABLE TO STAY OUT IN THIS RAIN, ANYWAY...
OKAY, JANE;... WE'LL GO...
DAVE! WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
I..I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT...
..BUT SUDDENLY, I GOT THE STRANGEST FEELING...
YES..?!..
3.

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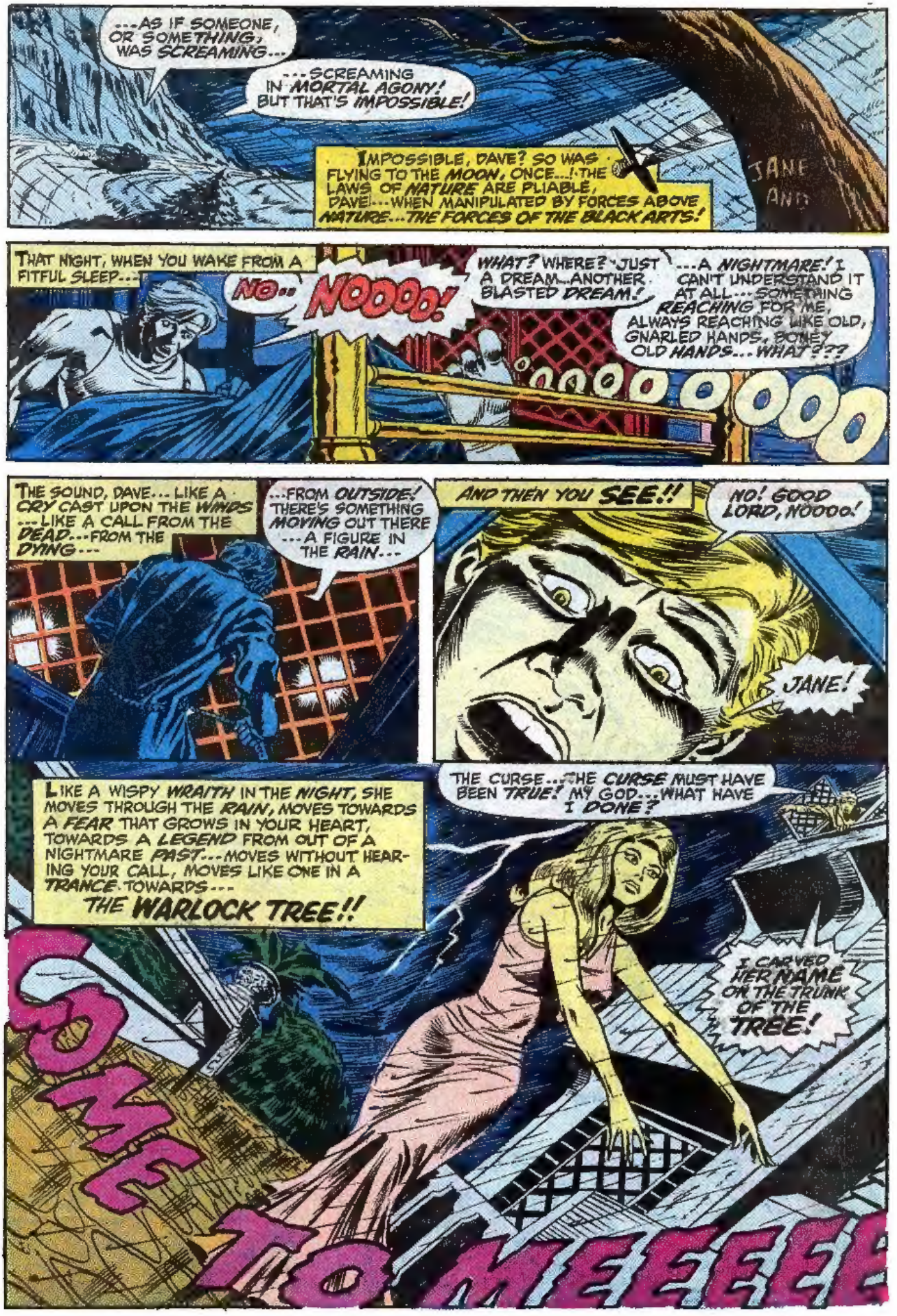
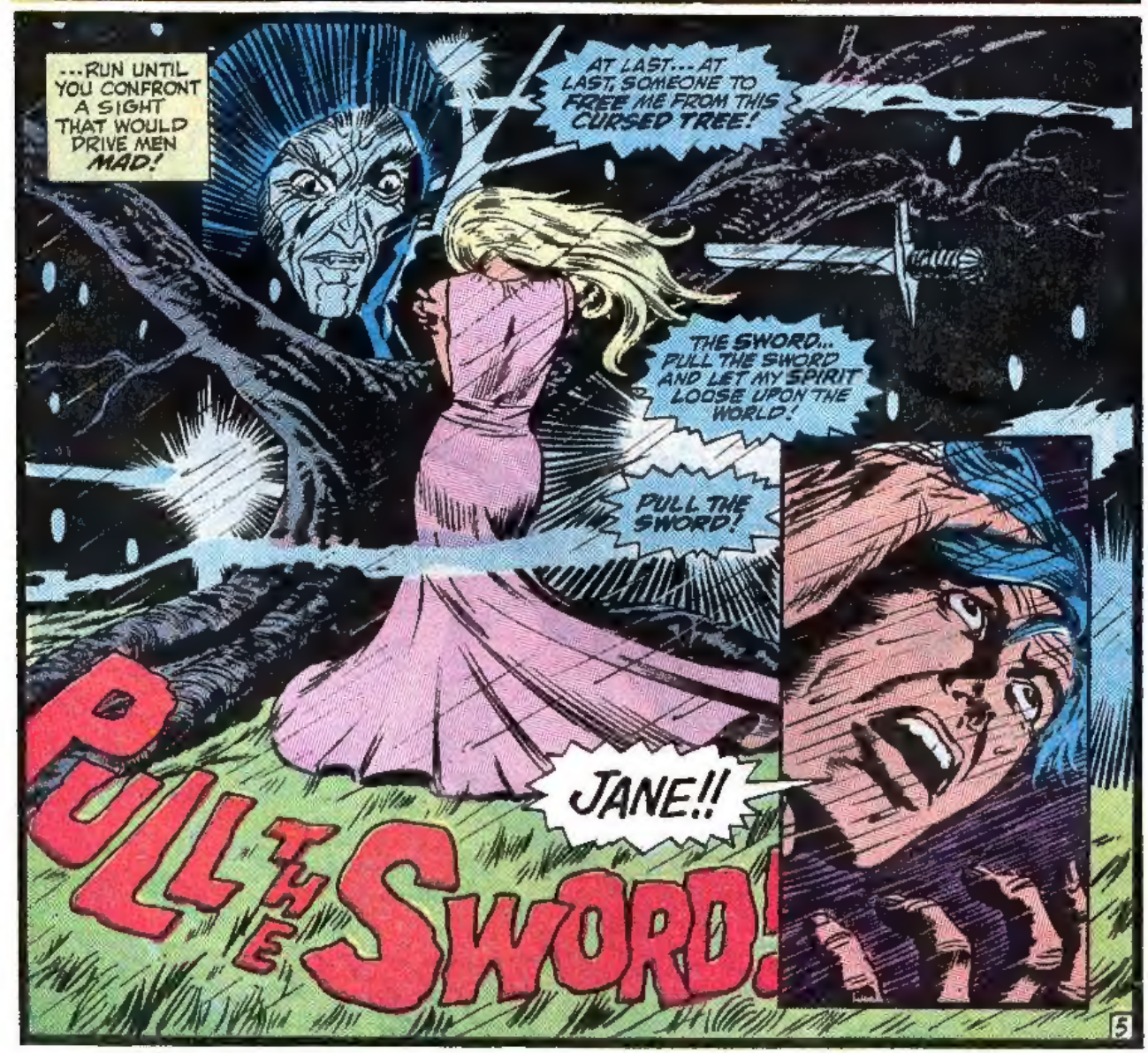

...AS IF SOMEONE, OR SOMETHING, WAS SCREAMING...
...SCREAMING IN MORTAL AGONY! BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
IMPOSSIBLE, DAVE? SO WAS FLYING TO THE MOON, ONCE...! THE LAWS OF NATURE ARE PLIABLE, DAVE...WHEN MANIPULATED BY FORCES ABOVE NATURE...THE FORCES OF THE BLACK ARTS!
JANE AND
THAT NIGHT, WHEN YOU WAKE FROM A FITFUL SLEEP...
NO.. NOOOO!
WHAT? WHERE? JUST A DREAM...ANOTHER BLASTED DREAM!
...A NIGHTMARE! I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT AT ALL...SOMETHING REACHING FOR ME, ALWAYS REACHING LIKE OLD, GNARLED HANDS, BONEY OLD HANDS...WHAT???
THE SOUND, DAVE... LIKE A CRY CAST UPON THE WINDS ...LIKE A CALL FROM THE DEAD...FROM THE DYING...
...FROM OUTSIDE! THERE'S SOMETHING MOVING OUT THERE ...A FIGURE IN THE RAIN...
AND THEN YOU SEE!!
NO! GOOD LORD, NOOOO!
JANE!
LIKE A WISPY WRAITH IN THE NIGHT, SHE MOVES THROUGH THE RAIN, MOVES TOWARDS A FEAR THAT GROWS IN YOUR HEART, TOWARDS A LEGEND FROM OUT OF A NIGHTMARE PAST...MOVES WITHOUT HEARING YOUR CALL, MOVES LIKE ONE IN A TRANCE TOWARDS... THE WARLOCK TREE!!
THE CURSE...THE CURSE MUST HAVE BEEN TRUE! MY GOD...WHAT HAVE I DONE?
I CARVED HER NAME ON THE TRUNK OF THE TREE!
COME TO MEEEEE

YOU NO LONGER DOUBT ...NO LONGER SCOFF AT THE TRUTH OF WHAT YOU NOW BELIEVE... YOU RUN, RUN INTO THE STORM-SWEPT NIGHT...
YOUR HEART POUNDS, QUICKENED WITH FEAR... FEAR NOT FOR YOUR OWN LIFE... AND YOU RUN...
...RUN TO SAVE THE ONE WHOSE LIFE YOU HAVE ENDANGERED... RUN TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THE ONE YOU LOVE...
A STRANGE ENCHANTMENT IN THE AIR...
...WHAT HAVE I DONE? WAIT... WHAT'S THAT OVER THERE?!
COME TO THE WARLOCK TREE


...RUN UNTIL YOU CONFRONT A SIGHT THAT WOULD DRIVE MEN MAD!
AT LAST... AT LAST, SOMEONE TO FREE ME FROM THIS CURSED TREE!
THE SWORD... PULL THE SWORD AND LET MY SPIRIT LOOSE UPON THE WORLD!
PULL THE SWORD!
JANE!!
PULL THE SWORD!

BUT WHEN SHE TURNS, HER EYES ARE BLANK, UNSEEING ---YOU ARE NO MORE TO HER THAN A SHADOWY GHOST!
BEFORE YOU UTTER ANOTHER WORD, THE LIVING NIGHTMARE COMES TRUE---GRASPING BRANCHES TREMBLING LIKE HUMAN HANDS TAKE YOU, LIFT YOU HIGH INTO THE AIR---GRIP YOU AS THE WIND TEARS AT THE CRUMBLING WALLS OF YOUR SANITY...
IGNORE THE PITIFUL FOOL... DO AS I WILL!
REMOVE THE SWORD, WOMAN---REMOVE THE SWORD AND FREE ME FROM MY AGE-OLD IMPRISONMENT WITHIN THIS ACCURSED TREE!
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, JANE---DON'T DO AS HE SAYS!
LISTEN TO ME--- IN THE NAME OF ALL THAT'S HOLY---LISTEN TO ME!
JANE--- JANE, IF YOU EVER LOVED ME ---I BEG YOU---
JANE!
PULL THE SWORD, FEMALE! PULL IT!!
6

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WHO CAN EVER KNOW--- WHO CAN EVER GUESS THE REASON FOR WHAT HAPPENED NEXT--- WHETHER IT BE MERE COINCIDENCE---
MERE COINCIDENCE OR THE TRICKERY OF THE FATES---
ARGH!
ZZZZ
ZATCH!
THE SMELL OF BURNING WOOD FLOATS THROUGH THE AIR, AS THE FLAMES FLICKER ACROSS THE AGED OAK THAT HAS BEEN THE WARLOCK TREE---
DAVE...THE VOICE...THE VOICE... IT'S GONE!
IT'S OVER, NOW... THE WIZARD'S DEAD...REALLY DEAD AT LAST!
THE SWORD ACTED AS A LIGHTNING ROD...DREW THE BOLT RIGHT TO IT!
IF YOU HAD BEEN TRYING TO PULL THE SWORD OUT WHEN IT HAPPENED...!
I...I COULDN'T DO IT, DAVE...SOMETHING STOPPED ME!
SOMETHING STRONGER THAN THE WIZARD'S HATE...
THE POWER OF...YOUR LOVE!
ALL THE WORLD LOVES A LOVER...AS WELL AS A HAPPY ENDING! AH, BUT WHAT'S THAT TINY, TENDER BUD THAT BLOOMS UNSEEN FROM THE GNARLED, BURNT-OUT STUMP? COULD IT POSSIBLY BE THAT--? WELL, WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE....WON'T WE?

'TIS TRUE THIS YOUNG FELLOW IS NERVOUS... VERY, VERY DREADFULLY NERVOUS! BUT WILL YOU SAY HE'S MAD? FOLLOW HIM... LISTEN TO HIS THOUGHTS... WATCH WHAT HE DOES-- AND DECIDE FOR YOURSELF!
THE TELL TALE HEART
BROKE... STONE BROKE... AND STUCK IN THIS LIMEY BURG WITHOUT A FRIEND-- WITHOUT A RELATIVE--
--EXCEPT FOR THAT SCROOGE OF AN UNCLE!
GOT NO CHOICE... I GOTTA HIT THE OLD CREEP FOR SOME MONEY!
A Classic of the Macabre by EDGAR ALLAN POE
ADAPTED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF STAN LEE
by TOM PALMER & DENNY O'NEIL
lettered by ARTIE SIMEK

HIS NAME IS CLAUDE PANE...HE'S AN AMERICAN STRANDED IN ENGLAND... AND HE'S DESPERATE--
JUST LOOKING AT THE FOSSIL GIVES ME THE WILLIES-- ESPECIALLY THAT BLASTED GLASS EYE OF HIS...
--BUT I GOT TO COME ON CHEERFUL!
HI THERE, UNCLE!
DON'T BE WASTIN' MY TIME AS YOU WASTE YOUR OWN!
IT'S A MERCY MY SISTER DIED BEFORE SHE COULD SEE HOW WORTHLESS HER SON GREW!
UNC, I NEED A LITTLE LOAN!
SPEAK YOUR PIECE AND GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!
LOOK, ALL I ASK IS THE PRICE OF A TICKET BACK TO THE STATES!
WELL, YOU'LL NOT BE GETTING IT! 'TIS HIGH TIME YOU LEARNED TO WORK!
YOU'VE SPENT YOUR INHERITANCE IN NIGHTCLUBS --AND YOU HAVE THE NERVE TO ASK ME FOR MORE MONEY TO SQUANDER--!
IT'S NOT LIKE I GOT A LOT OF CHOICE!--OKAY, UNCLE, YOU'VE HIRED YOURSELF A LACKEY!
YOU CAN LABOR FOR IT, THEN! I NEED HELP...I'LL PAY YOU EXACTLY WHAT YOU'RE WORTH!
IMP
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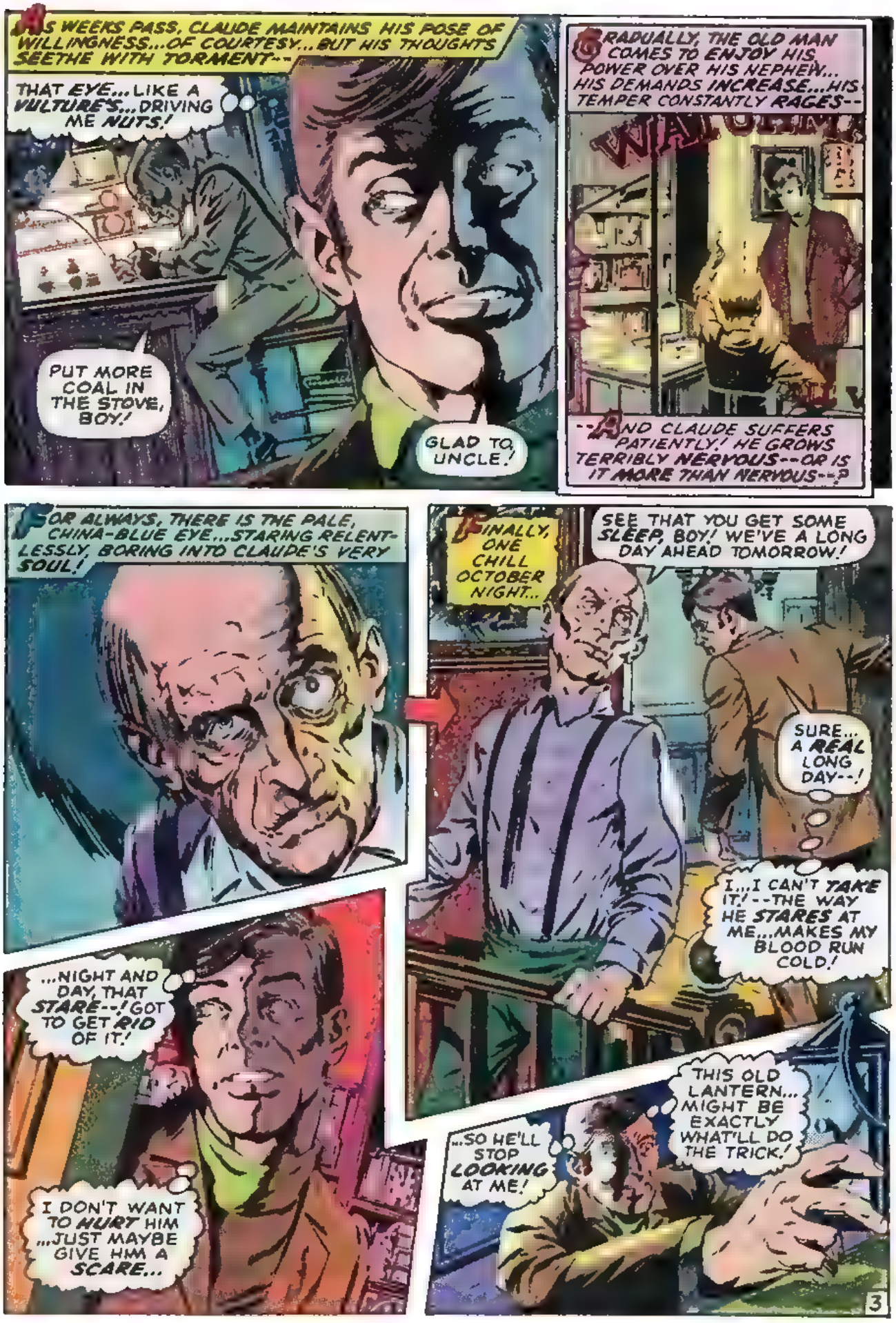
AS WEEKS PASS, CLAUDE MAINTAINS HIS POSE OF WILLINGNESS...OF COURTESY...BUT HIS THOUGHTS SEETHE WITH TORMENT--
THAT EYE...LIKE A VULTURE'S...DRIVING ME NUTS!
PUT MORE COAL IN THE STOVE, BOY!
GLAD TO, UNCLE!
GRADUALLY, THE OLD MAN COMES TO ENJOY HIS POWER OVER HIS NEPHEW... HIS DEMANDS INCREASE...HIS TEMPER CONSTANTLY RAGES--
--AND CLAUDE SUFFERS PATIENTLY! HE GROWS TERRIBLY NERVOUS--OR IS IT MORE THAN NERVOUS--?
FOR ALWAYS, THERE IS THE PALE, CHINA-BLUE EYE...STARING RELENTLESSLY, BORING INTO CLAUDE'S VERY SOUL!
FINALLY, ONE CHILL OCTOBER NIGHT...
SEE THAT YOU GET SOME SLEEP, BOY! WE'VE A LONG DAY AHEAD TOMORROW!
SURE... A REAL LONG DAY--!
I...I CAN'T TAKE IT! --THE WAY HE STARES AT ME...MAKES MY BLOOD RUN COLD!
...NIGHT AND DAY, THAT STARE--! GOT TO GET RID OF IT!
I DON'T WANT TO HURT HIM ...JUST MAYBE GIVE HIM A SCARE...
THIS OLD LANTERN... MIGHT BE EXACTLY WHAT'LL DO THE TRICK!
...SO HE'LL STOP LOOKING AT ME!
3

SILENTLY, CAUTIOUSLY, CLAUDE ASCENDS THE STAIRCASE! SO SOFTLY DOES HE TREAD THAT THE OLD HOUSE IS SILENT, SAVE FOR THE WIND MOANING THROUGH THE EAVES LIKE A SOUL IN AGONY...
SLOWLY, STEADILY, HE INCHES OPEN HIS UNCLE'S DOOR ...A WATCH'S MINUTE HAND MOVES MORE SPEEDILY THAN HIS...
SLOWLY, STEADILY, HE THRUSTS HIS HEAD INTO A DRAFTY ROOM WHICH IS SHROUDED WITH THICK DARKNESS...
THE OLD DUFFER DESERVES A FRIGHT...HE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT ME... DOESN'T DREAM THAT I HAVE FEELINGS...
AND STILL MORE STEALTHILY, HE RAISES THE SHUTTER OF THE LANTERN, AND A SINGLE DIM RAY, LIKE THE THREAD OF A SPIDER, SHOOTS FORTH...
I CAN'T DO... ANYTHING... WHILE HE'S SLEEPING!
...AND FALLS UPON THAT ...GLAZED, INHUMAN EYE...
...AN EYE WHICH STARES UNSEEING... EVEN IN SLUMBER...!

THEN, THE OLD ONE UTTERS A LOW MOAN--A STIFLED SOUND THAT ARISES FROM THE BOTTOM OF HIS BEING--OR THE DEPTHS OF A NIGHTMARE...!
BA-THUMP
--AND STILL THERE STARES THAT FILMY, ICE-BLUE ORB! IT GLARES IN THE DEEP GLOOM
BA-THUMP
...THE MOAN RISES HIDEOUSLY!
AND CLAUDE HEARS ANOTHER SOUND, A LOW, DULL SOUND SUCH AS A WATCH WRAPPED IN COTTON MIGHT MAKE! IT PRODS HIM TO FURY...
BA-THUMP
--FOR HE RECOGNIZES IT AS THE PUMPING OF HIS UNCLE'S HEART!
BA-THUMP
LOUDER AND LOUDER IT BEATS--AS THE OLD MAN AWAKES WITH A START...
LOUDER IT BEATS... LOUDER... LOUDER...!
BA-THUMP
BA-THUMP
THAT NOISE--! THAT HORRIBLE, BEATING HEART--! WORSE THAN THE EYE... WORSE THAN ANYTHING ON EARTH OR IN HELL!
SOMEONE WILL HEAR... UNLESS IT STOPS--FOREVER!
WITH A SHRIEK OF MINGLED FEAR AND RAGE, CLAUDE LEAPS INTO THE INKY CHAMBER--

A FEVERISH HOUR LATER...
THE OLD TIGHTWAD WANTED ME TO WORK! WELL, I WORKED, ALL RIGHT...
...SO WELL THAT NOBODY'LL EVER FIND HIM!
FUNNY... I DON'T FEEL GUILTY-- OR JUMPY--
--IN FACT, I FEEL JUST GREAT! TOMORROW I'LL VISIT HIS BANK!
SHOULD BE SIMPLE TO FORGE HIS SIGNATURE ON A CHECK--
--THEN IT'S PURE FUN FOR LITTLE CLAUDEY!
R-R-I-N-G!
FIRST, I THINK I'LL GO TO PARIS, AND...
HUH--? SOMEBODY AT THE DOOR!
I...I WAS READING ...THE BIBLE!
AND ISN'T IT A BIT LATE FOR YOU TO BE AWAKE, SIR?
YES...DEAR UNCLE'S GONE TO... TO LONDON, ON BUSINESS!
YOU'D BE THE OLD BLOKE'S NEPHEW, WOULDN'T YOU?
GOT TO STAY COOL... I'M IN THE CLEAR!
WOULD THERE BE ANY TROUBLE HERE?
BEGGIN' YOUR PARDON, SIR! A NEIGHBOR REPORTED A SHOUT FROM THIS BUILDING!
THERE ISN'T A CHANCE THEY'LL FIND UNCLE!
NO, NOTHING WRONG, OFFICER!
6

YOU GENTLEMEN ARE WELCOME TO LOOK AROUND...SATISFY YOURSELVES THAT MY NEIGHBOR WAS MISTAKEN!
WE APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION, SIR!
HERE...THIS IS MY UNCLE'S BEDROOM!
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS STAY EASY...SMILING...
I'LL PLACE MY CHAIR OVER THE SPOT WHERE I... BURIED HIM!
YOU'D BE A YANK NOW, EH?
YES... BUT I'M ENJOYING MY STAY HERE! I...
BA-THUMP
THAT SOUND--! I MUST BE IMAGINING IT!
BA-THUMP
HE'S DEAD! HIS HEART CAN'T BE BEATING!
BA-THUMP
YOU'RE PALE! FEELING BADLY, SIR?
NO...NO, BLAST YOU! I'M FINE!
BA-THUMP
THEY HEAR! WHY DON'T THEY SAY SOMETHING?
WHY ARE THEY SMILING... MOCKING ME!?
THEY KNOW! THEY MUST KNOW!
ANYTHING IS BETTER THAN THIS AGONY!
BA-THUMP
BA-THUMP
BA-THUMP
BA-THUMP
ENOUGH... ENOUGH! I ADMIT IT...I MURDERED MY UNCLE...YES, MURDERED HIM!!
HELP ME...HELP ME TEAR UP THE FLOORBOARDS, AND SILENCE THE BEATING OF HIS HORRIBLE HEART!
BA-THUMP! BA-THUMP!
...FUNNY THE WAY THIS BLOKE UP AND CONFESSED LIKE THAT...WHEN WE DIDN'T EVEN SUSPECT 'IM!
HE KEEPS MUMBLIN' TO HISSELF ABOUT THE OLD MAN'S HEART BEATIN'--SO HOW COME WE DIDN'T HEAR NOTHIN'?
NOW YOU HEAR IT, AND NOW YOU DON'T! BY THE WAY, OUR HERO WAS FINALLY CURED OF HIS NERVOUSNESS... THE ROPE CURE...!
7

YOU GOT UP EARLY THIS MORNING, DIDN'T YOU, GEORGE ASHTON... STRAPPED A THIRTY-POUND KNAPSACK ON YOUR BACK... ADDED A COUPLE OF FRYING PANS SO SPIC-AND-SPAN YOU COULD SEE YOUR FACE IN THEM... AND SET OUT FOR THE BECKONING, FORESTED PEAKS NEARBY! BUT, MAYBE YOU WOULDN'T STRIDE ALONG QUITE SO CONFIDENTLY, GEORGE, IF YOU KNEW WHAT WAS WAITING FOR YOU ON THOSE HALF-LIT HILLSIDES... IF YOU SUSPECTED THAT...
SOMETHING LURKS ON SHADOW MOUNTAIN!
SUN'S JUST RISING... NOBODY ELSE IN TOWN UP YET... AND THAT'S GOOD!
I DON'T WANT TO SEE ANYBODY ...OR TALK TO ANYBODY ..NOT AFTER ALL THAT'S HAPPENED!
DRUG STORE
A SOMEWHAT SINISTER SALAD... ONE PART NOSTALGIA AND TWO PARTS NIGHTMARE... SUMPTUOUSLY SERVED UP BY:
STAN LEE EDITOR
ROY THOMAS WRITER
JOHN BUSCEMA ARTIST
JOHN VERPOORTEN, INKER || SAM ROSEN, LETTERER

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IT STILL HURTS, DOESN'T IT, GEORGE? BUT THEN THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE! HOW MANY WEEKS HAS IT BEEN? ONLY TWO? BUT, IT SEEMS LIKE AN ETERNITY...OR PERHAPS ONLY YESTERDAY...!
SHE WAS SO YOUNG...SO BEAUTIFUL!
BUT, DEATH DOESN'T PAY ANY MIND TO A LOVELY FACE... A LAUGHING VOICE...OR EVEN AGE!
IT JUST COMES, LIKE A THIEF IN THE NIGHT... AND LEAVES YOU WITH NOTHING!
NOTHING BUT EMPTY ARMS... AND BROKEN HOPES!
THEY SAY I SHOULD FORGET HER...
...AND MAYBE THEY'RE RIGHT!
YET, HOW DO YOU FORGET EYES THE COLOR OF THE SKY...OR A SMILE LIKE A SUMMER DAY?
HOW DO YOU FORGET A DREAM THAT YOU LIVED?
BUT, NO HAUNTING ECHO ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS, GEORGE...AND SO YOU WANDER ONWARD, UPWARD. .SCARCELY NOTICING WHERE YOU ARE, UNTIL...
I'M ON... SHADOW MOUNTAIN!
D;DN'T MEAN TO CLIMB TH'S WAY...'CAUSE NOBODY EVER COMES HERE!
THERE ARE TOO MANY LEGENDS OF THIS PLACE...TOO MANY OLD WIVES' TALES...!
...WHICH ARE BEST LEFT TO OLD WIVES, GEORGE ASHTON!
SOMEONE'S UP AHEAD... SPEAKING TO ME!
BUT WHO...?
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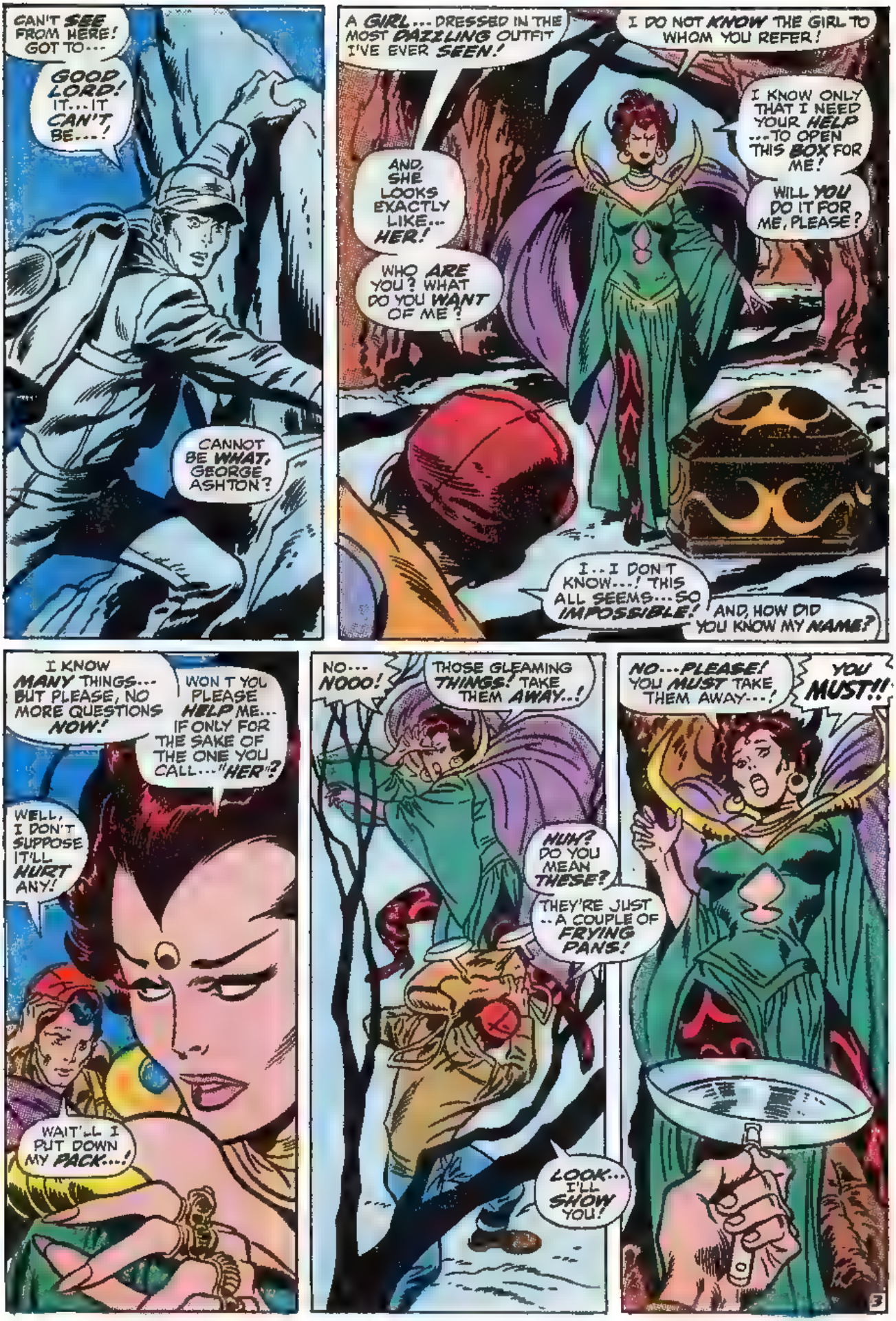
CAN'T SEE FROM HERE! GOT TO---
GOOD LORD! IT...IT CAN'T BE...!
CANNOT BE WHAT, GEORGE ASHTON?
A GIRL... DRESSED IN THE MOST DAZZLING OUTFIT I'VE EVER SEEN!
I DO NOT KNOW THE GIRL TO WHOM YOU REFER!
I KNOW ONLY THAT I NEED YOUR HELP ...TO OPEN THIS BOX FOR ME!
WILL YOU DO IT FOR ME, PLEASE?
AND, SHE LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE... HER!
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME?
I..I DON'T KNOW...! THIS ALL SEEMS...SO IMPOSSIBLE!
AND, HOW DID YOU KNOW MY NAME?
I KNOW MANY THINGS... BUT PLEASE, NO MORE QUESTIONS NOW!
WON'T YOU PLEASE HELP ME... IF ONLY FOR THE SAKE OF THE ONE YOU CALL..."HER"?
WELL, I DON'T SUPPOSE IT'LL HURT ANY!
WAIT'LL I PUT DOWN MY PACK...!
NO... NOOO!
THOSE GLEAMING THINGS! TAKE THEM AWAY..!
HUH? DO YOU MEAN THESE?
THEY'RE JUST ..A COUPLE OF FRYING PANS!
LOOK... I'LL SHOW YOU!
NO...PLEASE! YOU MUST TAKE THEM AWAY...!
YOU MUST!!
3

ANYTHING YOU SAY! I CAN'T RESIST ANYONE SO LOVELY... SO LIKE---
HEY! I DIDN'T NOTICE IT BEFORE... BUT THIS CRATE LOOKS LIKE A COFFIN!
MERELY OPEN IT... PLEASE!
SURE ...WHY NOT?
BUT, THE TOP'S LIGHT! I DON'T SEE WHY YOU NEEDED MY...
OH MY GOD!
NO... NO!!
NO! STAY BACK!!
YOU'RE REALLY NOT READY FOR WHAT HAPPENS NEXT, ARE YOU, GEORGE? BUT THEN, PERHAPS NO MAN COULD BE---!
BUT, THE NIGHTMARISH FORM WHICH UNWINDS ITSELF FROM WITHIN THE COFFIN ISN'T INTERESTED IN YOU, IS HE, GEORGE?
IT MERELY LUMBERS AWAY...SLOWLY, EVER SO SLOWLY...TOWARDS THE SLEEPY VILLAGE BEYOND---
AND, AS IT DOES...
LORD! IT JUST BRUSHED AGAINST THAT VINE...
...AND THE WHOLE THING... DIED!!
4

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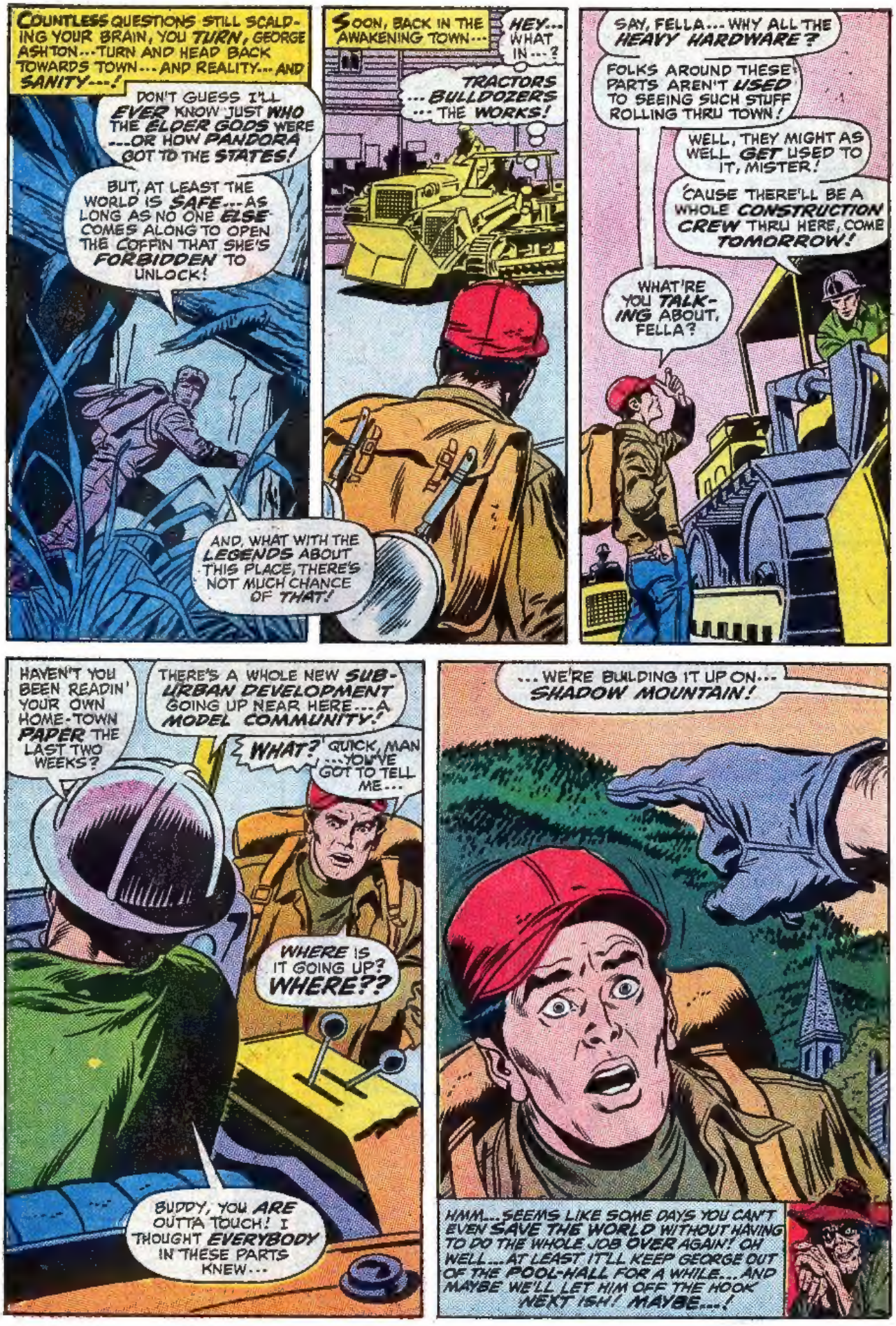
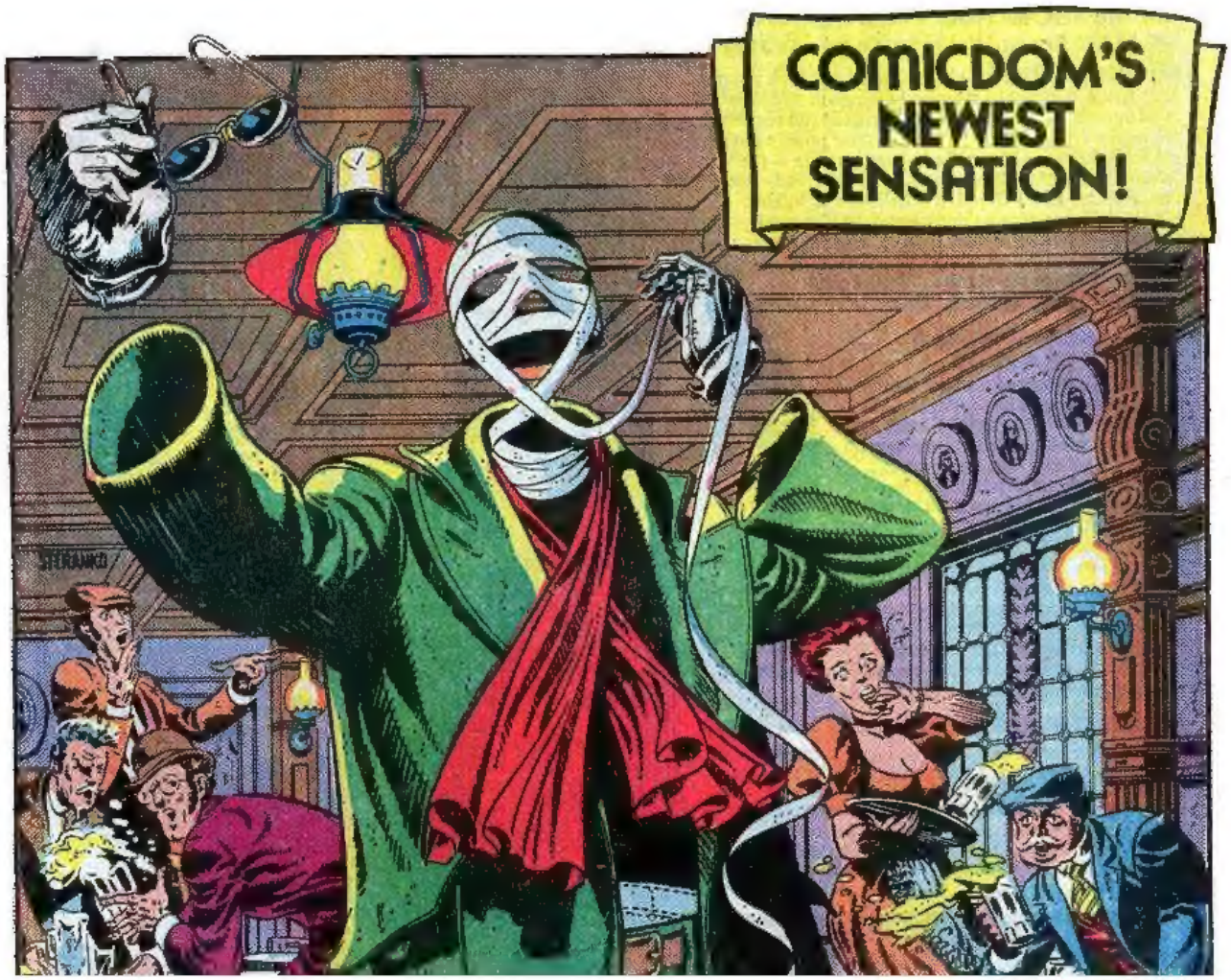
...JUST AS ANYTHING SHALL DIE THAT TOUCHES MY PRETTY ONE... OR IS TOUCHED BY HIM!
FOR WE HAVE WAITED LONG, HE AND I...WAITED FOR SOMEONE TO OPEN WIDE THE CASKET WHICH THE ELDER GODS FORBADE ME TO UNLOCK!
BUT, DID THEY TRULY THINK THAT THEIR AGE-OLD SPELLS WOULD FOREVER BIND PANDORA?
PANDORA? THEN-- THE WHISPERED LEGENDS--THE HALF-REMEMBERED MYTHS--ARE TRUE!
YET, MAYBE I CAN STILL STOP THE MONSTER I UNLEASHED...!
GO ON, MORTAL ...MERELY TOUCH ITS GRISLY FLESH... AND YOU SHALL DIE LIKE THAT HAPLESS VINE!
IF...IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN I MAY HAVE DOOMED ALL OF MANKIND!
AND, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO...NOTHING I CAN EVEN TRY...UNLESS...
...UNLESS... THIS FRYING PAN---!
THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT THE PAN THAT FRIGHTENED YOU...
AND NOW, I THINK I KNOW WHAT IT WAS!
NO!!
HERE, YOU SCHEMING WITCH... LOOK!!
YES!
LOOK! TAKE A GOOD, LONG LOOK!!
SEE YOURSELF... AS YOU REALLY ARE... AS A CENTURIES-OLD HAG!!
EEEEEE
5

THEN, I WAS RIGHT! YOU WERE AFRAID OF THE FRYING PAN--- BECAUSE YOU KNEW IT WOULDN'T BE FOOLED LIKE I WAS---!
---FOOLED BY A FACE YOU SNATCHED FROM MY GRIEVING MEMORY!
ALL YOU SAY IS TRUE! NOW---TAKE IT AWAY--- PLEASE---
NO! NOT TILL YOU CALL BACK THAT---THAT THING!
YES--- YES---I WILL--!
OKAY, THEN I'LL--- HEY! WHAT'RE YOU DOING WITH THAT HANDFUL OF DIRT?
SOMETHING WHICH SUCH AS YOU COULD NEVER COMPREHEND, MORTAL!
WATCH--- AND BE SILENT!
DEMON---YOU WHO PLOD UNTHINKING, UNSTOPPABLE DOWN THE HILL'S STEEP PATH---NEED MY WORDS!
BY THE ONE WHO BOUND ME HERE, TILL THERE CAME ONE WITH NO FEAR... BY THAT EARTH WHICH NOW I HOLD... LET THY COFFIN THEE ENFOLD!!
YOU SHUDDER, DON'T YOU, GEORGE ---AND A MILLION UNVOICED QUESTIONS DIE A'BORNING ON YOUR LIPS, AS A LOATHSOME, LUMBERING SHAPE DRAWS NEAR AGAIN---
---AND SLOWLY, SILENTLY YIELDS ITSELF ONCE MORE TO THE WAITING COFFIN'S SHADOWY EMBRACE---!
KKKRRRIIKKKK
THE COFFIN IS SEALED AGAIN!
PANDORA DOES NOT LIE, MORTAL!
THEN, YOU KEPT YOUR WORD!
SHE DOES NOT NEED TO!
NOW LEAVE--- AND MY MEANING SHALL SOON BE MADE CLEAR TO YOU!
6


COUNTLESS QUESTIONS STILL SCALDING YOUR BRAIN, YOU TURN, GEORGE ASHTON---TURN AND HEAD BACK TOWARDS TOWN---AND REALITY---AND SANITY---!
DON'T GUESS I'LL EVER KNOW JUST WHO THE ELDER GODS WERE ---OR HOW PANDORA GOT TO THE STATES!
BUT, AT LEAST THE WORLD IS SAFE---AS LONG AS NO ONE ELSE COMES ALONG TO OPEN THE COFFIN THAT SHE'S FORBIDDEN TO UNLOCK!
SOON, BACK IN THE AWAKENING TOWN---
HEY... WHAT IN---?
TRACTORS ---BULLDOZERS --- THE WORKS!
AND, WHAT WITH THE LEGENDS ABOUT THIS PLACE, THERE'S NOT MUCH CHANCE OF THAT!
SAY, FELLA---WHY ALL THE HEAVY HARDWARE?
FOLKS AROUND THESE PARTS AREN'T USED TO SEEING SUCH STUFF ROLLING THRU TOWN!
WELL, THEY MIGHT AS WELL GET USED TO IT, MISTER!
'CAUSE THERE'LL BE A WHOLE CONSTRUCTION CREW THRU HERE, COME TOMORROW!
WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT, FELLA?
HAVEN'T YOU BEEN READIN' YOUR OWN HOME-TOWN PAPER THE LAST TWO WEEKS?
THERE'S A WHOLE NEW SUBURBAN DEVELOPMENT GOING UP NEAR HERE---A MODEL COMMUNITY!
WHAT?
QUICK, MAN ...YOU'VE GOT TO TELL ME---
WHERE IS IT GOING UP? WHERE??
BUDDY, YOU ARE OUTTA TOUCH! I THOUGHT EVERYBODY IN THESE PARTS KNEW---
...WE'RE BUILDING IT UP ON--- SHADOW MOUNTAIN!
HMM....SEEMS LIKE SOME DAYS YOU CAN'T EVEN SAVE THE WORLD WITHOUT HAVING TO DO THE WHOLE JOB OVER AGAIN! OH WELL....AT LEAST IT'LL KEEP GEORGE OUT OF THE POOL-HALL FOR A WHILE...AND MAYBE WE'LL LET HIM OFF THE HOOK NEXT ISH! MAYBE....!

Scanned, Cleaned and Saved



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